



City of Santa Barbara California

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION 013-10

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT CERTIFICATION FOR THE PLAN SANTA BARBARA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE SEPTEMBER 30, 2010

PLAN SANTA BARBARA FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT CERTIFICATION:

Plan Santa Barbara (Plan SB) is the planning process to update Santa Barbara's General Plan. The General Plan shapes the City through goals, policies and programs concerning growth management, environment, housing, transportation and land use to best meet our community needs now and in the future

The Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the *Plan Santa Barbara* General Plan Update (GPU), publicly released by the City of Santa Barbara on September 16, 2010, includes the following components:

- FEIR Volume I: Final Program Environmental Impact Report
- FEIR Volume II: Appendices
- FEIR Volume III: Response to Comments
- FEIR Volume IV: Hybrid Alternative Analysis and *Plan Santa Barbara* Impact Summary Tables

WHEREAS, on September 29-30, 2010, the Planning Commission held a noticed public hearing on the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the *Plan Santa Barbara* General Plan Update.

WHEREAS, 18 people appeared to speak regarding the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) thereto, and the following exhibits addressing the FEIR were presented for the record:

1. Staff Report with Exhibits, dated September 16, 2010, including:
 - a. Exhibit B: PlanSB EIR Project Impact and Mitigation Summary
 - b. Exhibit C: EIR Alternatives Analysis Summary
 - c. Exhibit D: Listing of GPU and DEIR Commenters
 - d. Exhibit E: Planning Commission FEIR Certification Findings
 - e. Power Point Slide Presentation
2. Correspondence received by the Commission:
 - a. Natasha Lohmus, Department of Fish and Game, via email
 - b. Dave Davis and Megan Birney, Community Environmental Council, via email
 - c. Connie Hannah, League of Woman Voters, Santa Barbara, CA
 - d. Jeffrey King, Mesa Architects, via email
 - e. Lisa Plowman, SB4ALL, via email
 - f. Bernie Bernstein, via email

- g. Bruce Burnworth, via email
- h. Kellam de Forrest, via email
- i. Norbert H. Dall and Stephanie D. Dall, via email
- j. Tracy Fernandez, Santa Barbara, CA
- k. J. Michael Holliday, via email
- l. Paul Pommier, Sr., via YouPlanSB website
- m. Paula Westbury, Santa Barbara, CA
- n. Deborah Wright, via email
- o. Sheila Lodge, via email
- p. LeeAnne French, Citizens Planning Association, via email
- q. Fred Sweeney, Upper East Association
- r. Jarrell C. Jackman, Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation and Richard Rozzelle, District Superintendent, California State Parks

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Santa Barbara Planning Commission:

- I. Certified the Final Program Environmental Impact Report dated September 2010 for the *Plan Santa Barbara* General Plan Update, making Findings A through C below pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines §15090 and City CEQA Guidelines §II.2, based on information provided in the EIR process, staff report and Exhibit E, public input, and Commission discussion, and including clarifying additions and edits to the Final EIR by the Planning Commission as identified in Section II below.

- A. The final EIR has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The FEIR for the *Plan Santa Barbara* General Plan Update was prepared in accordance with applicable procedures and content requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), State CEQA Guidelines, and City of Santa Barbara CEQA Guidelines.

An advertised Notice of Preparation for the EIR was issued January 15, 2009 for a 30-day agency and public comment period, and a Planning Commission public scoping hearing was held on January 29, 2009.

The EIR documents have been prepared by a qualified team headed by AMEC Earth and Environmental, Inc., working under oversight of experienced City staff.

The Draft EIR underwent a noticed 60-day public review and comment process March 19-May 18, 2010, including a noticed Planning Commission public hearing held April 28, 2010. Comments on the Draft EIR were received from 15 public agencies, 16 community/ public interest organizations, 45 individuals, and six City commissions and committees.

The Final EIR includes written responses to comments received on the Draft EIR and associated edits to the EIR analysis. Proposed responses to comments and hearing notice were provided to public agencies that commented on the Draft EIR ten days prior to the EIR certification hearing.

The EIR analysis meets CEQA requirements for a General Plan Program EIR, and EIR standards of adequacy pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15151.

- B. The final EIR was presented to the Planning Commission, and the Planning Commission reviewed and considered the information contained in the final EIR. Pursuant to requirements of Government Code §65354, the Commission will make recommendations on adoption of the proposed *Plan Santa Barbara* General Plan Update to the Santa Barbara City Council, which recommendations have been informed by Commission consideration of the final EIR.

The proposed Final EIR was issued to the public and provided to members of the Planning Commission on Thursday, September 16, 2010. The Planning Commission held a noticed public hearing on Wednesday September 29, 2010, and received a staff presentation of the Final EIR and public comment, and reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR.

- C. The final EIR as amended reflects the Planning Commission's independent judgment and analysis.

- II. Said certification action above is subject to inclusion of the following clarifying additions and edits to the Final EIR documents, which do not alter the FEIR conclusions:

- A. Addition to Volume I-FEIR, EIR Summary, page 7 at the end of the "Alternatives to the Project" section, and to Volume IV-Hybrid Alternative Analysis, page 1-1 Introduction, Section 1.1, beginning as new fourth paragraph, as follows:

Background on Hybrid Alternative Discussions

As envisioned by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and State CEQA Guidelines, City decision-makers for the *Plan Santa Barbara* General Plan Update are considering modifications to project policies to incorporate mitigation and some policy components from the alternatives analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), to reduce environmental effects and/or best address Plan objectives.

Initial Planning Commission Hybrid: The initial Planning Commission hybrid alternative package recommended to City Council (June 2010) is a policy set that the Commission felt would best address the following key criteria for the General Plan Update:

1. Maximize the achievement of Plan Objectives set forth in the Sustainability Framework and Principles, including Living within Our Resources;
2. Provide a guiding long-term vision and innovative flexible policy framework with implementation tailored and modified as needed by the Adaptive Management Plan;
3. Mitigate environmental impacts to the maximum extent feasible;
4. Achieve internal consistency and balance among and between the policies;
5. Ensure the policies are realistic, operational, capable of being implemented, and have support from key community stakeholders; and
6. Support the economic vitality of the City Downtown and as a whole.

Components of the initial Planning Commission recommended hybrid modifications to the Plan included:

- Reduction of the non-residential growth cap (to a total of 1 million SF, with no exclusions)
- Stronger Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and parking pricing programs to mitigate traffic congestion, reduce energy and greenhouse gas generation, and improve jobs/housing balance
- Residential parking maximums Downtown (1.5 spaces/unit) and parking sales/rental separate from the housing to address building sizes and affordability and traffic management (“unbundling”)
- Reduced unit sizes and increased density incentives in appropriate areas to promote affordable workforce housing and traffic management (27-45 du/acre and up to 60 du/acre for community benefit projects with supermajority vote; 50% density increase for rental and employer-sponsored housing in commercial and multi-family areas)
- Stronger design standards to address compatible building sizes and protection of historic resources and community character (including guideline for primarily 2-3 story building heights with 4th story only for community benefit projects with supermajority vote)
- Stronger historic resources protection policies (including buffers around historic districts, designated resources, and Presidio)
- Increased affordable inclusionary housing requirement (25%), and relaxed second unit standards in commercial areas near transit corridors and services and with consideration citywide.

The Planning Commission initial recommended hybrid alternative was seen as a positive compromise set of policies and received strong support from a large majority of the community groups that have participated in the General Plan Update process.

Initial City Council Hybrid Alternative: Initial City Council discussions provided direction for consideration of many of the policy elements in the Planning Commission recommendations, but some with further modifications. In response to public input, Planning Commission recommendations, and Council discussion, softened policy language was considered for some policies, based on concerns about economic interests, property rights, and livability/community character. Initial Council hybrid policies for consideration included:

- Reduced non-residential growth cap (1 million SF), but with more exclusions [for EIR analysis, an additional 0.5 million SF was assumed for excluded uses]
- Inclusion of the range of Transportation Demand Management strategies, but no assured commitment to expansion of existing Transportation Demand Management and parking pricing programs without demonstrated stakeholder support [no expansion beyond current TDM program was assumed for EIR analysis]
- Consider residential parking maximums downtown, and allow “unbundling” of housing and parking costs
- Reduced unit sizes and density increases in appropriate areas (27-45 du/acre; 50% density overlay for rental/employer housing) [areas to be determined, consider Planning Commission recommended areas]

- Stronger design standards to address compatible building sizes and protection of historic resources and community character (supermajority vote for buildings exceeding 45 feet; buffers around historic districts, designated resources, and Presidio)
 - Consider increased affordable inclusionary housing requirement (25%) along with suspension during economic downturns, sliding scale for types of uses, and potential commercial fee; and relaxed second unit standards on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis with neighborhood support.
- B. Addition to FEIR Volume I, EIR Summary, page 7, at the end of the “Alternatives to the Project” section (following the “Background on Hybrid Alternative Discussions” section added in item A. above), as follows:

Summary of FEIR Alternatives Analysis

The following summarizes EIR alternatives analysis of environmental impacts in the year 2030:

Class 2 Impacts (Less than Significant with Mitigation): The EIR identified the following potentially significant impacts mitigated to less than significant levels: air quality (diesel particulates), biological resources (loss of upland and riparian habitats); geological conditions (sea cliff retreat); hazards (adequacy of facility capacity for household hazardous materials collection); heritage resources (effects of development on historic resources); hydrology and water quality (extended range sea level rise from climate changes); noise (highway noise level increases affecting residential uses); open space and visual resources (gradual loss of open space); public utilities/ solid waste (adequacy of long-term solid waste management facility capacity).

For these impacts on local resources, hazards, and services, *potential* significant impacts could be the least under the Lower Growth Alternative, and would be less than significant with mitigation (Class 2.)

Under all the other alternatives, including the *Plan Santa Barbara* project, No Project, Additional Housing, and Hybrid Alternatives, *potential* significant impacts on resources, hazards, and services would be similar in type and somewhat greater than the Lower Growth Alternative. However, these impacts would also be mitigated to less than significant levels (Class 2) under all the alternatives, for the same residual impact level.

Class 1 Impacts (Significant): All alternatives analyzed in the EIR would be expected to result in Class 1 impacts to Transportation (traffic congestion) and Climate Change (greenhouse gas generation). Lower residual impacts for both issues are largely a result of a lower amount of non-residential growth and more extensive application of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and parking pricing policies (which act to reduce impacts for existing traffic as well as the small increment of additional growth).

The alternatives are ranked in the following order as to lowest transportation and climate change impacts, and most effective mitigation, as analyzed in the EIR:

Additional Housing Alternative

The Additional Housing Alternative assumes low non-residential growth (1.0 million SF), and Robust TDM and parking pricing policies (i.e., strongest expansion), resulting in lowest impacts on traffic congestion (from existing 13 impacted intersections to 14 impacted intersections) and greenhouse gas generation (1.4 million tons/year), as well as substantially better jobs/housing balance (0.41 jobs/unit).

Plan Santa Barbara Project

The *Plan Santa Barbara* project assumes two 2.0 million SF non-residential growth and Moderate TDM/parking pricing expansion, resulting in the *potential* for 20 impacted intersections and estimated 1.62 tons/year greenhouse gases. Roadway improvements could mitigate 2-3 intersections. With application of Mitigation Measure T-2, the robust TDM/parking pricing per Alternative 2, most of these impacts would be mitigated. The jobs/housing balance would be in approximate balance (1.44 jobs/unit).

Lower Growth Alternative

The Lower Growth Alternative assumes low non-residential growth (1.0 million SF), but no expansion of TDM/parking pricing, resulting in the potential for 18 impacted intersections and 1.58 million tons/year greenhouse gas generation, and improved jobs/housing balance (0.90 jobs/unit). Because this alternative assumed a policy set to maintain or increase parking standards, the T-2 mitigation for robust TDM was not considered compatible with the policy set, and not applied in the EIR analysis. However, if the T-2 mitigation was applied, the traffic and greenhouse gas impacts could be lower than described for this alternative.

Hybrid Alternative

The Hybrid Alternative analysis in the FEIR assumed the lower non-residential growth cap of 1 million SF for designated categories, and the EIR analysis assumes an additional 0.5 million SF for uses excluded from the categories. The policy set includes the range of TDM strategies, but no committed level of expansion, and the EIR analysis therefore assumes no expansion of existing TDM/parking pricing programs. The less extensive TDM/parking pricing has more influence than the lower non-residential growth, and greater impacts result to traffic (estimated 20-26 intersections) and greenhouse gas generation (estimated 1.6 - 1.62 tons/year). The jobs/housing balance would be somewhat better than the *Plan Santa Barbara* scenario (<1.44 jobs/unit). Application of the T-2 robust TDM/parking pricing could substantially reduce the impacts.

No Project/ Existing Policies Alternative

The No Project Alternative assumes 2.2 million SF non-residential growth and no expansion of existing TDM/parking pricing, resulting in the greatest impact on traffic congestion (26 intersections), and greenhouse gas generation (1.62 million tons/year). Application of the T-2 robust TDM/parking pricing could substantially reduce the impact. The No Project Alternative worsens the jobs/housing balance (2.04 jobs/ unit).

- C. Edit in Volume IV-Hybrid Alternative Analysis, page 2-1, Section 2.1 Hybrid Alternative Description/Overview/Background, to delete the following text from this section, and address it as part of the addition to page 1-1 identified in item A above ("Background on Hybrid Alternative Discussions"):

The Hybrid Alternative would account for the following Planning Commission and City Council key criteria for the General Plan Update:

1. Maximize the achievement of Plan Objectives set forth in the Sustainability Framework and Principles, including Living within Our Resources;
2. Provide a guiding long-term vision and innovative flexible policy framework with implementation tailored and modified as needed by the Adaptive Management Plan;

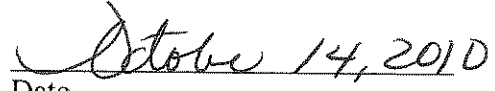
3. Mitigate environmental impacts to the maximum extent feasible;
 4. Achieve internal consistency and balance among and between the policies;
 5. Ensure the policies are realistic, operational, capable of being implemented, and have support from key community stakeholders; and
 6. Support the economic vitality of the City Downtown and as a whole.
- D. Edit to FEIR Volume I, Section 16.1.2 Transportation Setting/Circulation/Other Neighborhoods/Mesa, page 16-6, third paragraph, fourth line:
Delete the word “formerly” before “SR 225”.
- E. Addition to FEIR Volume I, page 16-71, Section 16.8 Transportation/Mitigation Measures, as new paragraph at the end of Mitigation Measure Trans-1.c Develop an Intersection Master Plan to Address Problem Intersections; and add to EIR Impact Summary and Mitigation Monitoring Tables in Volumes I (page 32, Table ES-3 and page 23-23, Table 23-1) and Volume IV (page 5-7, Table 5.1 and page 6-24, Table 6-1):
Mesa Area Arterial and Side Street Improvements: Consider improvements as needed to address effective travel operations and safety at Mesa area intersections, including Cliff Drive/Meigs Road; Cliff Drive/Flora Vista/Mesa Lane; Meigs Road/Red Rose Way; and Cliff Drive/Santa Barbara City College West Entrance.
- F. Addition to FEIR Volume I, pages 23-14 to 23-16, Table 23.1 EIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for Plan Santa Barbara, Measure RM VIS-2 Community Character; and addition also in Volume IV, PlanSB Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Table 6.1, pages 6-12 to 6-14:
Under “Implementation Responsibility” column of the tables, for all subsections of RM VIS-2, add “Historic Landmarks Commission” as one of the implementing commissions.
- G. Edit to FEIR Volume I, page 19-15, Section 19.2.1 Regional Housing Needs Assessment, third paragraph, fifth line:
Change reference for City percentage of South Coast population from “41” to “45”.
- H. Edit to FEIR Volume III, p. 759, Response to Comment C15-3 regarding DEIR p. 8-9:
Delete “Portions of Hope Ranch (e.g., Hope Ranch Annex) are located within the City, while the rest of”.

This motion was passed and adopted on the 30th day of September, 2010 by the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Barbara, by the following vote:

AYES: 7 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT: 0

I hereby certify that this Resolution correctly reflects the action taken by the city of Santa Barbara Planning Commission at its meeting of the above date.


Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary


Date

PLEASE BE ADVISED:

THIS ACTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION CAN BE APPEALED TO THE CITY COUNCIL WITHIN TEN (10) CALENDAR DAYS AFTER THE DATE THE ACTION WAS TAKEN BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION.